

CITY

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Style



Fashions down east: a new spirit

The fashion fight for the home market

They've made inroads in New York and Toronto but the small community of local fashion designers have a hard time convincing Maritimers of the quality of their products

by Elizabeth Stevens

Atlantic Canadians spent more than \$419 million on clothing in 1984. It's only a fraction of what Canadians paid out across the country, but enough to convince local designers that there's a silver thread in it for them.

In order to get a greater share of the fashion dollar, however, they feel their image and methods have to change. Locally-designed fashions are better known outside the Maritimes and Canada than they are here, says Judy Eames, chairman of the Fashion Association of Nova Scotia (FANS) which was created two years ago. "It's actually one of the reasons FANS was started. We saw that it was necessary to push the fashion side rather than the craft side — not the intricacies of a piece of woven fabric but rather what would be done with the fabric."

Some people don't buy local garments because they look too "handmade" or too "crafty," Eames says, "so we're going to concentrate on the New York and New England markets. There they don't care where it's made as long as it's well made." This would be following the successful route taken by Vicki Lynn Bardon, whose well-known Suttles and Seawinds fashions sell better in New York than they do in Toronto.

Eames heads a group within FANS which organizes fashion shows to generate business. FANS, in short, is still a modest affair. But it has spirit. "We may be small but we work extremely well together and we're determined to make it a success," says Halifax designer Robert Doyle.

A low output — simply not enough is produced — is one of the local industry's problems. The only designer who produces on a large scale is Bardon, of New Germany, N.S., and she uses cottage-craft production methods. Local designers cater to the high-priced end of the market and not mass production. If the production problem could be solved, a lot of designers could turn out lower-priced garments, but the "rag trade" is still dominated by big-time merchandisers, chain operators and design houses that take advantage of cheap labor in other parts of the world. On this scale local designers can't hope to compete, although good workmanship and unique styling are the areas in which they can.

Robert Doyle points out the very practical advantage of the association. "If you need some silk velvet, and one of the other members has a piece left over, it makes a lot more sense to go to the telephone and call someone here, rather than call Montreal. The transaction is cheaper, more efficient and we both benefit."

His House of Pryor Couture Ltd. employs three people full-time and two part-time and he's looking for more space. Doyle, who worked with Jacques Fath in Paris, found that on his return to Toronto no one was really interested in fashion. In 1963 he became the resident designer at Neptune Theatre when it opened in





Dress and Jacket, (left) has embroidered and applied butterflies on pure linen, by Judy Eames, Daydreames Fashions, Dartmouth

Her "Restaurant Dress" (above) is of wool crepe with a design of fans on the quilted silk satin yoke

Cover photo, a kilted Menzies tartan coatdress in viyella with matching shawl, by Robert Doyle, House of Pryor

Model, Terrilynn Browning
Makeup, Terry Ann Brideau



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Halifax. Since then he's been associated with most major theatre companies across Canada and is now the director of costume studies for Dalhousie University's theatre department. He makes a ready-to-wear line as well as one-of-a-kind pieces, but says that the latter is "not the way to go because most people can't afford the kind of labor that's involved — sometimes 200 hours on one gown."

The "down east" identity image is something that another group of designers called Clique has found successful. They tried to create and interpret current trends and styles into a "look" that's distinctly "Atlantic," using traditional skills and natural fabrics while turning out modern fashions.

But what is the down east identity? Some of the designers say that if you see a piece of clothing that's not mass produced, has classic lines in subdued colors and superb construction, then it's made here. Others say that if you see something that doesn't emulate Toronto, Milan, Rome or New York that it's local. Others claim they know what it isn't — an imitation of one of the trends such as punk or new wave. "Fashion has to do with dreams; it should not be analyzed too much," is a noted remark by American makeup artist Way Bandy. Atlantic Canada may be a good place to apply it.

Whether it can or can't be analyzed may not be important. What is important can be summed up in a remark overheard at a Clique fashion show about two years ago. "Only here in the Maritimes can you find handiwork like this; they take the time to do things properly." If local fashion designers can carry on this tradition, then more Maritimers may find the money they pay out on clothes is better spent at home. **C**

CityStyle has a new look — graphically and editorially.

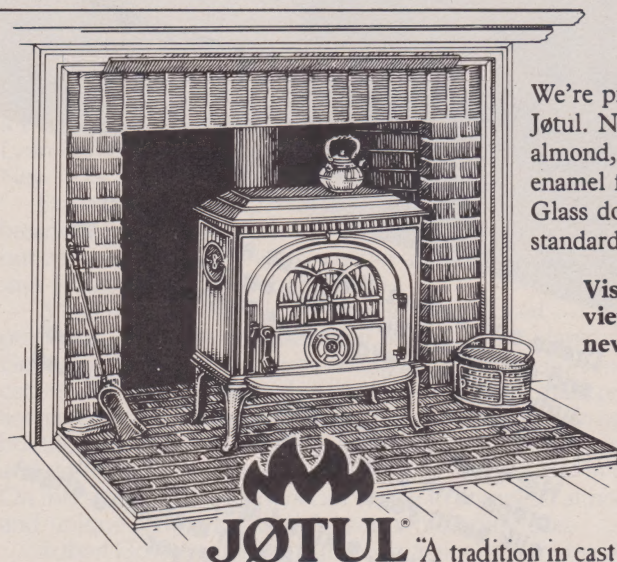
The change in design reflects our plans to bring you an exciting mix of new departments and familiar features, all with a distinctly urban flavor. CityStyle springs from the lifestyle of the people who live in Halifax-Dartmouth and the nearby communities.

CityCuisine, CityFashion and CityCulture offer news of restaurant chefs, local designers and people in the arts world. Then there are the fields of education, politics, small business, entertainment, sports and fitness, health and medicine — the list is as endless as the personalities involved. Look for profiles of people and neighborhoods — friends of yours, the street you live on, characters you would like to meet.

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A chef and his inventions

Jack Sorenson, former professional musician, now full-time restaurateur, seasons his recipes with zesty comments

by John Cunningham

The chef-owner of the Zwicker Inn can be as prickly as the sea urchins in the waters of Mahone Bay just across the street. The professional musician in him may be responsible for that, but as a restaurateur he charms his guests into returning for his innovative food creations.

Jack Sorenson, trained as a pianist, doesn't see himself as an "artist" — the word, applied to chefs, is overused, he feels. He views his culinary talents as those of an inventor and his restaurant as a place of invention. He has developed the sauces, stocks, breads, noodles, soups and ice cream and they come from the kitchen homemade. "Those were foolish decisions economically," he rather boldly admits, "but they're largely why people come here." Noodles at the Zwicker Inn are rolled instead of extruded. They're prepared frequently in one of the house specialties — Noodles with Mushrooms — served in smooth, rich, creamy portions.

Sorenson compares his experience operating the restaurant over the past six years with "living on a roller coaster. I've worked harder in those six years than most people do in a lifetime." Not all that work is in the kitchen. He's as easily found checking out shellfish at a south shore mussel farm as in the convivial dining room of his inn. "I prefer mussels to scallops although scallops are considered more of a delicacy," he says, and "I can guarantee the mussels are fresh."

Not so the scallops. Sorenson shows no hesitation in stating that "although the fishermen say the scallops were caught yesterday and shucked last night" they are often less than fresh and tangy. "Even though this is a fishing area, the product is generally bad," he maintains.

The enticing aroma of garlicky, lemon-steamed mussels wafts deliciously from the kitchen Sorenson supervises and in which he devises most of his recipes, testimony to the fact that, whatever the difficulties, top quality products are found and used.

Sorenson and his wife, Katherine, bought the inn in 1979. It was a derelict building that had served during much of the 19th century as a tavern and hotel. Year by year, they have been refurbishing the property on Mahone Bay's main street. The first year in business, Sorenson did all the cooking. These days, which number seven a week from 7 a.m. to midnight, he's in and out of the kitchen every five to ten minutes, bustling about "oiling hinges, fixing ice machines and training staff," to say nothing of visiting his favorite mussel farm.

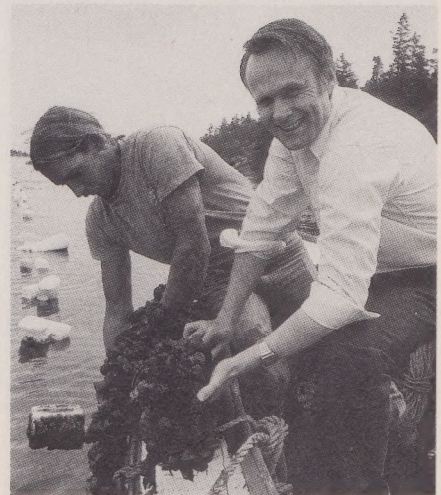
Sorenson says he likes to run his inn simply and free of pretensions. A visit to a Dublin, Ireland, restaurant where the waiter insisted he order in French made him detest affectation. He doesn't like to see it in any restaurant, especially his own.

His first plans in the food service industry were to open up a natural food and snack shop. "I happen to be interested in nutrition," he said while breakfasting on raw carrots and a slice of rye bread toast. "If I had my way, I wouldn't have a grain of sugar in my restaurant, I do not season with salt."

He agrees that some concessions have to be made to popular demand. Still, he says, "We take more care than most places with respect to nutrition. My clientele is interested in food as good food value rather than merely satisfying appetites."

His work habits and opinionated manner are traceable, perhaps, to his origins in the hard-working silver, lead and zinc mining town of Wallace, Idaho. A community of 30,000 located in a narrow mountain valley, Wallace was "full of strong individuals who were working hard," he says. "I find excitement and reward in endeavor."

It's a long way to the Zwicker Inn from Wallace, Idaho, and from life as a musician. Sorenson trained as a pianist and taught piano and music history at the post-secondary level, including a stint at Dalhousie University. He's also a former CBC Halifax music producer. "It became boring," he says. "That's why we did this, which is not boring."



Sorenson (right) at the mussel lines

To keep things lively, Jack Sorenson sees that recipes like these appear on the menu of the Zwicker Inn.

Lemon-Steamed Mussels

This is the basic recipe for an excellent dish that is found in Marseilles. We use specific amounts of the ingredients; but that's boring. Try your own proportions.

Scrub and debeard about a pound and a half of mussels per person. Combine the following:

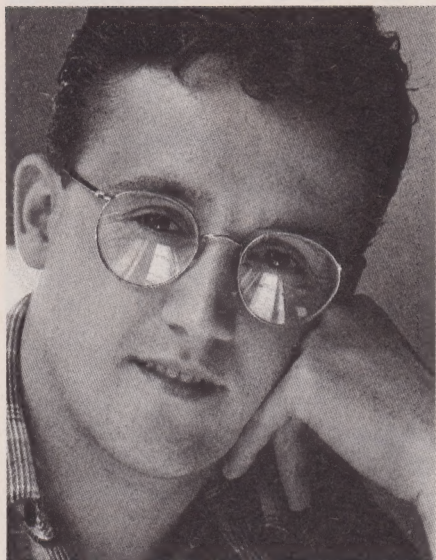
- unsalted butter, with flour worked in
- grated carrot
- sliced green onion
- garlic
- chopped parsley
- freshly ground pepper
- water

Bring water to a boil, add mussels and stir to coat them evenly with the sauce. Cover and steam for 3 to 6 minutes. Do not overcook. Serve with about ten lemon slices.

Cream and Mushroom Sauce for Noodles

Chop some mushrooms and quickly fry them in a bit more butter than you think you should. Then add enough of the following mixture (it must be shaken just before using) to get a consistency you like. Bring swiftly to a boil while stirring, and toss with just-cooked noodles.

- 1 cup whipping cream
- 2 tsp. medium dry sherry
- pinch of nutmeg
- 1 tsp. arrowroot flour
- 1/8 tsp. salt



by Larry Gaudet

Students of karate are required to harden their thumb muscles, so I enrolled at Dalhousie University instead, and there I learned superior methods of self-defence for life's unexpected challenges. Graduation depended on my willingness to obey a few professors who demanded that I mystify simple ideas in complex language. Principles governing the study of economics and sociology invariably include learning tedious jargons, and that pushed my interest in the liberal arts almost exclusively towards English Literature, where at least I found good books to read. Six years later, two of which I spent as a hostile dropout who killed time by earning a stockbroker's licence, I've finally got my degree. As a consequence, I'm in worse financial shape than Glace Bay.

It was a week after Merrill Lynch of Canada clipped me from their list of potential broker-trainees that I humbly notified the authorities at Dalhousie of my return. So for the second time I embraced a system whose rituals, in some respects, rival the twisted codes of corporate juggernauts.

Stated melodramatically, as my undistinguished undergraduate career concludes, I'm a defeated man, only grudgingly liberated from an adolescent bitterness towards the university environment of the 80s. Exposure to a few wise teachers and classmates taught me that my anger and its rhetoric — accusing Dalhousie of not preparing me for the job-market — were the rantings of

A weary defence of the Class of '85

a person unwilling to work hard enough to make the right connections. Laziness masquerading as integrity can't protect you from reality forever: I no longer invoke the names of Dalhousie administrators, the minister of education and South End landlords when I scrawl graffiti across the walls of tavern bathrooms.

But beyond that, a lament persists in certain bohemian ideologies that the universities produce hordes of right-wing bigots lacking any social conscience. Can I defend the Class of '85 against this charge? Or is that impossible, an indefensible position given that our worship of prestige, wealth and buzz words appears to be obsessive? Clearly, destroying the school computer, as protesters did at Sir George Williams some years ago, has gone out of vogue. But what's more naive: shouting Chairman Mao's proverbs at your parents back in '68, or snuggling up with Lee Iacocca's autobiography in '85? Perhaps we should ask China; it has done both.

Student bibles have changed with the times. A little red book has been replaced by a big black thing: *In Search of Excellence*; one of the authors tells us that he went through an IBM training program early in his career; "we sang songs every morning and got just as enthusiastic... as the workers in a Japanese company." How wonderful.

Some prophets of the late 60s anti-war movements are out to pasture in tenure-land, or starting up software firms in places like Yarmouth, but today's so-called visionaries would rather bypass activism altogether and abandon idealism quicker than their forebears. The argument: "Why spend five years of my life worrying about El Salvador, when I can stop now and it won't make any difference." As long as urban guerillas don't drive a truckload of explosives through, say, the front window of the McDonald's on Quinpool Road, then the prevailing spirit among those with the benefit of a university education will champion the merits of free enterprise and individual initiative. Condos aren't bought with food stamps.

It's no surprise that the loudest noise

on campus is the drone of young entrepreneurs. The corporate ladder doesn't interest them because of their quite legitimate fear that middle management can be a vacuum from which there's no return. On a darker note, their contempt for unions and other bastions of our mildly socialist leanings, is worn as a badge of honor. One such creature, just graduated, told me that after she had worked registering voters for Nova Scotia's last provincial election, she correctly guessed who the NDP supporters were. In her opinion they have long hair and dirty children and eat soya beans on a regular basis. When the election was called, NDP posters in semi-affluent neighborhoods led her to believe that burned-out hippies who renovate old houses are the evil forces behind attempts to ruin capitalism. Are her silly ideas an indication of how the Class of '85 thinks? No, not exactly.

One of my early idols, who was somewhat older than me, led the overthrow of his high school's student government and set up a Marxist regime — which dissolved when summer vacations began. At McGill he pulled straight A's in Political Science by protesting about the CIA's involvement in Chile; he still brags that the RCMP once maintained a file in his name. After graduation in 1973, he then worked for five years in the foreign-policy division of a major Canadian bank. Now he owns three bars in Montreal.

So here we are: the Class of '85, Dalhousie's most recent gift to the future. What are we like? I can only speak for myself. At night, I watch as Barbara Frum reduces the globe to a glossy package of sustained chaos for my edification. But that doesn't stop me from planning post-graduation conquests with a sense of wonder and ambition. Though there's no one Vietnam to focus on, I monitor 50 potential disasters in my spare time. Should a few members of my graduating class feel the same way, I wonder if it occurs to them that the kind of social awareness I'm talking about only adds up to voyeurism? ☛

Elected school boards: who cares?

by Deborah Draper

When angry parents and school students marched on the Nova Scotia Legislature and Halifax City Hall last spring, parent organizer Afra Kavanagh found it rather amusing to watch them being sent back and forth. She recalls, "The minister of education came out and said, 'It's not our fault, go talk to the city,' and the city said 'the province negotiated the contract, it's their fault so you go march on them.' It was just a runaround."

Kavanagh and others feel that what happened last spring over the issue of funding cutbacks in Halifax schools could have been avoided if Nova Scotia had elected school boards with full taxing authority.

School boards in Nova Scotia are made up of both elected and appointed members. One-third of the board's members are appointed by the provincial government, one-third by the municipality, and the remainder are elected from the public at large. School board funding comes from the province and the municipality, both of which are represented on the board.

Nova Scotia is the only province in Canada besides Newfoundland not to have fully elected school boards. Elected boards in several other provinces, such as Ontario, have full taxing authority and are able to directly determine the size of their budgets.

Kavanagh maintains that if Halifax had had a fully elected school board, last spring's events need not have occurred — parents would have known with whom to communicate and an elected board, she maintains, would have known the community's feelings about the programs that were cut and would probably have increased their budget accordingly.

Unlike Kavanagh, not everyone in Nova Scotia is convinced that elected school boards are a good idea. A fully elected board with taxing authority would be confusing to the electorate, according to Halifax alderman and former appointed school board member Art Flynn. He says he feels sorry for anyone who has to run for school board. "The electorate gets deluged with so much information during a civic election that the school board candidates get lost in the shuffle. As far as many of the electorate are concerned, I don't think they care if it's an elected or appointed board; they think it's still going to cost them money."

Only Nova Scotia and Newfoundland don't have fully elected school boards. It's a contentious issue but the pressure for change is mounting



Kavanagh: "parent commitment to education will continue"

Emmet Currie of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union which supports elected boards, agrees that one of the perceptions people have about elected school boards with taxing authority is that they'll have to pay more taxes. He says that's not necessarily so — a person's total property tax bill would likely remain the same, but it would be apportioned differently.

To escape increased taxes, however, and still have increased education spending, taxpayers would have to come to grips with the fact that municipal services might be cut back. "To avoid these cutbacks, property taxes might ultimately have to be increased. This," says Alderman Flynn, "is what worries property owners."

Flynn adds that public participation in the political process would have to increase for elected boards to work. Kavanagh sees the public as being aware enough of education and ready to take more responsibility for it. She expects education to be a municipal election issue in October. She says there's a higher involvement by all the Parent-Teacher Associations in Halifax. "When we called for support in our battle with City Hall, of the 21 PTAs across the city, only three could not participate because of previous commitments." This commitment to education, she says, will continue.

The provincial government isn't opposed to elected boards, but the municipalities are seen by many to be dragging their feet on the issue. Municipalities feel their caution is justified. They fear they would lose control over municipal spending and cease to be overseers of the level of education funding.

The municipalities also feel that the

incentive for aldermen or appointed school board members to monitor and limit education spending might be greater than that of elected members. Aldermen represent parents but also senior citizens and other taxpayers, while elected school board members usually represent only parents.

According to one municipal official, elected school boards would have a tendency to throw more money at a problem rather than spending wisely. "With elected boards," he asks, "where's the incentive, who's overseeing the thing, who's saying 'look, we've got to deliver more French lessons for the buck — and better French lessons?'"

Both sides see the elected school board issue as one of accountability. Councillor Lois Wiseman, an appointed member of the Halifax County-Bedford District School Board who's in favor of fully elected boards, says, "Your accountability is greater when you're directly responsible to someone rather than in a roundabout way. As a councillor I'm directly accountable to the public who elected me. As a municipally appointed school board member I am only indirectly accountable to people for education in this area."

Conflict of interest can arise, she says, when you're trying to wear both hats. "At budget time you're torn. As a councillor you're getting direction from council — and your first loyalty is to that body — that we can't support any more than a five per cent increase in the school board budget. But as a school board member you look at the budget and you say 'How in the world? We can't survive on a five per cent increase.'"

From time to time charges are levelled that provincial appointments to

boards are made strictly on political grounds and that the provincial government attempts to influence boards through "its" members. For her part, Jessie Miller, provincially appointed member of the Halifax County-Bedford board denies these accusations. She says she has never felt any political pressure in trying to do her job. She feels her appointment was based solely on her interest in education and that appointed members are working hard for the parents and kids. "I feel the public is being well served by the appointees. I don't think just anybody's picked. Living out here in Mosher's River — I'm a hundred miles from Halifax — I feel that my com-

munity and school involvement were instrumental in my being asked."

While Nova Scotia debates the issue of elected school boards with taxing authority, Ontario has such a system in place. Ontario Ministry of Education official Sue Hannah says the boards deliver the service, raise the money and have primary responsibility and accountability to the public. The provincial government, although it provides funding, acts along with the municipalities as a support base.

"Elected school boards work because the public makes the members accountable," Hannah says. "They put a lot of pressure on the trustees (mem-

bers). There are many meetings, on things like school closures due to declining enrolments, and they come and they march and they picket and they say to the trustees 'You can't close my school'. And it's an election year and it's finally a very political process."

A very political process. Whether the Nova Scotia government amends the Education Act to permit fully elected school boards with taxing authority will depend in greatest part on public opinion and the political pressure brought to bear. How many people out there really care? The turnout during the October municipal elections will provide part of the answer. **C**

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